



# Padre Island National Seashore SandDollar



**Friday, April 9, 2004**

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## **Superintendent**

I am excited to try this new Sand Dollar time schedule, and will be interested if the park family thinks of it as an improvement. I want to be sure we enhance communication collectively whenever we can. In that regard, I would remind everyone of the employee "suggestion box" here at the seashore. Anyone can leave a suggestion in the box at headquarters, visitor center, or via lotus notes to Marilyn McConkey. Regardless of how it comes forward, suggestions will be considered at squad.

I would also like to encourage those artists amongst us to submit those photos or painting to the park photo contest.

To each of you, I hope your Easter is spent in joy and peace.

Thank you for all that you are doing for this fantastic park.

Colin

### **Colin's schedule:**

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Monday, 4/12  | – In the Park                    |
| Tuesday, 4/13 | – On Travel; to Dallas/Houston   |
| Wed., 4/14    | – Houston, Sea Turtle Conference |
| Thurs., 4/15  | – In the Park                    |
| Friday, 4/16  | – In the Park                    |

## *Safety Notes--*

*Your contributions are greatly appreciated for the SandDollar and the safety bulletin board. Please send safety contributions to Pat.*

*Let's continue to encourage each other to be safe.*

*Make it a safe day.*

## **Administration**

Colin has received the cert for the secretary position.

TSP Open Season: The next Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) open season begins April 15 and ends June 30, 2004. During the open season, you may begin contributing to the TSP or change the amount of your TSP contributions. During this open season, employees covered by FERS may elect to contribute to the TSP up to 14% of the basic pay they earn each pay period; employees covered by CSRS may elect to contribute up to 9% of the basic pay they earn each pay period.

To make a contribution election, submit Form TSP-1 (Election Form) to your Servicing Personnel Office. You can obtain Form TSP-1 from your Servicing Personnel Office or the TSP Website ([www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)). You may invest in any of the five TSP investment funds (C, F, G, I, S). To change the investment of future contributions to your TSP account, you must request a contribution allocation. To change the investment of money already in your account, you must request an interfund transfer. To request a contribution allocation or an interfund transfer, use the TSP Web site ([www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)), the Thriftline (504-255-8777), or Form TSP-50 (Investment Allocation). Changes to current TSP accounts are to be made either by submitting a TSP-1, or through Employee Express, [www.employeeexpress.gov](http://www.employeeexpress.gov). New elections may be done through your Servicing Personnel Office.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:** This was sent to TEL coordinators. Just passing it along for your information and so you will know what trainings are in the near future.

From Sue Benson, TEL Network Coordinator – Greetings:

Within the next couple of weeks, we will be training each of you on the new TEL Registration process, *My Learning Manager*. We look forward to sharing this new registration process with each of you.

The current website for registration and reference documents, [www.telmps.net](http://www.telmps.net), will have limited use starting May 1. There will be two training events in May that will be using the current registration process, Managing Worker's Compensation Cases, on May 20, and Heat Loss Prevention, on May 27. The Heat Loss Prevention training will be the last event you register for at [www.telmps.net](http://www.telmps.net). I apologize for the overlapping systems but with change, there are often logistical challenges that make a clean sweep impossible. You should see both of these events on the [www.telmps.net](http://www.telmps.net) website very soon. The five other May events, listed below, can currently be seen in My Learning Manager.

During this transition period, the advertising of upcoming TEL events has been limited. Because many of you compete for space, we want to give each of you the opportunity to reserve your conference rooms, etc. Below is the "tentative" schedule. Please keep in mind our schedule does change - some of these courses are currently in the beginning development stage and other courses may come up that do not appear on the below tentative schedule.

Thanks and we look forward to talking to each of you soon.

DATE	DAY	BROADCAST	TIME
11-May	Tuesday	<b>The Interpretive Analysis Model for Supervisors</b>	12:00-4:00pm
12-May	Wednesday	attendance is required for both sessions to receive credit	
13-May	Thursday	<b>DOI Annual Ethics</b>	?
17-May	Monday	<b>Retirement Planning for New Employees</b>	2:00-4:00pm
20-May	Thursday	<b>Managing Workers Compensation Cases - Part 2</b>	?
25-May	Tuesday	<b>Preparing &amp; Presenting an Effective Interpretive Talk</b>	12:00-4:00pm
26-May	Wednesday	<b>Presentation Techniques</b>	12:00-4:00pm
27-May	Thursday	<b>Heat Loss Prevention</b>	?
3-Jun	Thursday	<b>The Interpretive Analysis Model</b>	12:00-4:00pm
8-Jun	Tuesday	<b>Interpretive Techniques/Create Opportunities for Connection</b>	12:00-4:00pm
10-Jun	Thursday	<b>Administrative Grievances-What You Don't Know Could Hurt You</b>	2:00-4:30pm
15-Jun	Tuesday	<b>Informal Interpretation</b>	12:00-4:00pm
16-Jun	Wednesday	<b>The Interpretive Process Model</b>	12:00-4:00pm
22-Jun	Tuesday	<b>Partnership Agreements</b>	?
13-Jul	Tuesday	<b>Grant Proposals for External Funding</b>	?
19-Jul	Monday	<b>NPS Recreation &amp; Preservation Programs</b>	1:30-3:30pm
10-Aug	Tuesday	<b>Dealing with Misconduct &amp; Progressive Discipline</b>	10:00-12:00pm
10-Aug	Tuesday	<b>Resolving Performance Issues</b>	2:00-4:00pm
26-Aug	Thursday	<b>Retirement Planning for New Employees</b>	2:00-4:00pm

## **TEL Courses**

Description of courses can be found at [www.telnpns.net](http://www.telnpns.net)

Apr 15      The Numbers Tell a Story: Fireline Refresher Training  
Apr 19      Retirement Planning for New Employees  
Apr 20      IDP Module 210 - Prepare and Present an effective  
                 conducted Activity  
Apr 26      NPS Recreation & Preservation Programs

**The trailer will be used for TEL training on Apr 15, and 26.**

## **Facility Management**

The Americorps team is on their Spring Break until Monday, April 12. Their last day of work will be Tuesday, April 13.

The first Vault Toilet tank has been installed at BIB and we will proceed with the installation of the second one at the Primitive Campsite area of Bird Island Basin.

The car wash rack is in operation; please use it as much as possible to work out any bugs that might come up. Be aware that you still have to use the pressure washer to remove the heavy build-up of mud. Also, try and keep the area clean by power washing the floor and picking up any trash.

## **Interpretation**

### **Farewell Party for Frank & Ann Tucker**

This is their last year! Please come to the party to wish them well and thank them for their many years and hours of service here in the park. We will miss them dearly.

The party is at Bennigan's, 5214 SPID, Thursday April 15, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. Please try to all come together to bid them farewell.

Just a reminder that the Spring Adopt-a-beach will be held on April 24. Phil needs three volunteers to work the registration desk. If anyone is interested, please contact him.

## **Protection**

A message from Dispatch: Whenever explosive devices are found (phosphorus markers, flares, ordnance, etc) DO NOT TOUCH! Even when they look spent/burned out, residue can reignite if they're handled.

Mark it so it can be easily found by a ranger in case you aren't available for directions. Call dispatch with exact location and description.

**The following two significant law enforcement incidents occurred in the park over the last several weeks.**

**\*\*During the early morning hours of April 2, 2004, a park ranger and Coast Guard law enforcement officers conducting an interagency drug interdiction operation came upon a shark boat that had landed at the 34 mile marker. Several people were off-loading bales of marijuana from the vessel and carrying them into the dunes to be buried. The shark boat fled when detected and could not be interdicted prior to it returning to Mexico. An intensive search was conducted throughout the day for two people seen fleeing into the dunes but no one was located in the heavy vegetation. Twenty seven (27) bales of marijuana weighing a total of 1419 pounds were seized.**

**\*\*During the evening of March 16, 2004, U.S. Coast Guard personnel identified a shark boat from Mexico headed north in the Gulf of Mexico. The vessel eventually turned west on a course to land in the park. Park rangers prepared to interdict the shark boat when it came ashore. As the vessel was offshore of the park, the Coast Guard pursuit was detected and those onboard began throwing bales overboard as the vessel tried to elude pursuers. The shark boat was eventually stopped about three miles offshore where Coast Guard and Immigration & Customs Enforcement personnel seized the boat and apprehended 5 Mexican nationals and 5 Chinese. Approximately 485 pounds of marijuana washed ashore over the next few days.**

Pat Donohue and Perky Wheeler traveled to Lyndon B. Johnson 4/4 - 4/6, to assist their staff with the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall event. Pat and Perky

have returned now but Tom Crowson is scheduled to go and will assist LYJO over the weekend, 4/9 - 4/11.

The park's first prescribed fire scheduled for Tuesday 4/13 or Wednesday 4/14, **has been postponed and rescheduled to the first week in May.** The Novillo Prescribed Fire will be 460 acres and serve to reduce fuel loading around the Novilla Line Camp as well as restore the natural role of fire back into the Padre Island landscape. All red carded firefighters in the park are invited to attend. This will be a great opportunity for those are interesting in developing their wildland fire skills. After checking with your supervisor please RSVP Randy if you will attend.

**The park will again have a team that will run the Beach to Bay Relay Marathon in May. We have representatives from Interpretation and Protection and are looking for one more runner, preferable a woman, to round out a team that will enter the Mixed Division category. This is the largest relay marathon in the country and has proved to be a lot of fun for everyone involved.**

**Clarissa Flores and Bruce Eagles will start work as seasonal protection rangers April 18.**

## **Resources Management**

### **Projects:**

- The placement of the new bird nesting signs on the spoil islands has been completed. The signs were donated by Texas Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, and the Audubon Society. The signs prohibit entry or landing on the spoil islands between February and August in order to protect nesting colonial waterbirds.
- The National Audubon Society is providing an intern to assist with a Snowy and Wilson's Plover survey. The entire Texas coast is included in the survey and will focus on nesting and hatching success. Steve Liptay has been selected as the intern. He arrived in the park on March 29 and will be staying at the new trailer near the ranger housing from now till August.
- Katie will be sampling the washover basin at the 46-MM every other Wednesday. Anyone interested in helping please contact Katie.

- Mist-netting for neotropical migrants has started. We have placed nine nets in the willow mottes near BIB and three in the cane in front of headquarters. The planned schedule for mist-netting is every Monday and Thursday from 7am-12 pm until the middle of May. These dates may be adjusted depending on weather. Anyone interested in helping please contact Darrell or Katie.
- We are again working on the park's mailing list, which will be used for planning documents and other needs. We are requesting that if you have any new contacts that you believe should be added to the list, please forward those to Darrell as soon as possible.

## **Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery**

FIRST KEMP'S RIDLEY NEST OF THE YEAR FOUND: A beach visitor found and reported a Kemp's ridley sea turtle laying eggs on Galveston Island, Texas on Monday April 5. The nesting site was in a heavily visited area between 29th and 30th streets, in front of the seawall. This was the first confirmed Kemp's ridley nest found on the Texas coast during 2004. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) personnel investigated the report, examined the turtle for tags, and located the nest. This head-started turtle was hatched in Mexico in 1989, reared at the NMFS Laboratory in Galveston for about a year, and released offshore from Galveston in August 1990. NMFS personnel retrieved the 85 eggs and transported them to our incubation facility for protected care. Hatchlings from this nest will be released sometime between about May 21 and May 27. This will be the first possible hatchling release for 2004 and hopefully many other will follow through the summer.

This is the second week of our patrols to find nesting Kemp's ridleys and sea turtle nests on North Padre Island. Volunteers and staff with the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery are continuing to patrol, supplemented by some patrols conducted by AmeriCorps members. We thank everyone that has been helping with the patrol program.

It is likely that our patrollers or beach visitors will find other Kemp's ridleys nesting at the national seashore any day. Kemp's ridleys nest mostly during the day and often in groups on windy days. Please look for nesting whenever you are on the beach and be especially watchful on days when it is windy, when a weather front is expected, and when other Kemp's ridley nests have been found. Please report observations of nesting sea turtles, sea turtle tracks, or sea turtle nests to Donna immediately.

Lots of seaweed is washing ashore, making it difficult to patrol and spot sea turtle tracks . Several small live and dead sea turtles have been found in the seaweed recently. Small sea turtles reside in drift lines of seaweed and debris that float in the ocean. When the seaweed washes ashore the small turtles that are resident in it also wash ashore. Please be watchful for these small turtles and for people that have found them. There have been reports of visitors placing live turtles back into the water and perhaps trying to take the carcasses of dead turtles home with them. Live turtles washed ashore are injured and **SHOULD NOT** be placed back into the water. Instead, they should be reported to Cynthia or Donna so that they can be transported to the ARK (rehabilitation facility) in Port Aransas. The dead turtles should also be reported to Cynthia or Donna so that they can be salvaged for later necropsy and study.

Donna will be out of the office Monday morning. She may also be out from Monday afternoon through Wednesday to attend the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle Recovery Team Stakeholders' Meeting in Houston. However, if it is likely that nesting will occur during that time Donna will not go on this travel.

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